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Housekeeper's Chat

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Thursday, December 4, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: "Home Baking"; "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering".

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My first question is not from a listener but a high school boy who lives near me and who knows me very well. I'm sure all of you who have struggled with the eternal question of the growing boy- "What can I do now?" - will be interested in Fred's question and my answer.

"Aunt Sammy," he announced, "three of the kids are coming over tonight, to study with me. Could you suggest something for us to do when we're through studying?"

"You might make candy," I offered.

"Why not something like doughnuts?" said Fred. "Couldn't you show us how to make doughnuts?"

The boys completed their studying in record time, donned kitchen aprons, and took possession of Fred's mother's kitchen. They divided the work. Fred gathered together the ingredients, John made the dough, under my supervision, Sid cut out the doughnuts, and Mac did the frying.

My recipe makes 40 doughnuts. You'd be surprised how very few of the 40 were left, when the boys said goodbye. Unless you have growing boys in your family, you'd also be surprised at the amount of flour they managed to scatter around.

"Let's make doughnuts again," said Fred, as he helped me straighten the kitchen. "The boys would lots rather do something like this, than just sit around."

Don't you think that was a good way for boys to have fun? I forgot to say that my recipe for doughnuts is in the bulletin "Home Baking!", which many of you now have.



My next question is also about something to eat. It is from a woman in Vermont, who wants to know if cold sliced ham and potato salad would be suitable refreshments to plan for a community supper, indoors, in the winter time.

Yes, indeed, just the thing, and easy to serve. With coffee, and doughnuts and homemade cakes by way of dessert. Maple frosting on the cake would be my choice if I were up in Vermont.

Incidentally, I suppose this listener knows that there are at least a dozen different ways to flavor potato salad. With diced cooked potato as a base I suggest you try one of the following, which I'll number for convenience:

1. Pickled beets and onion
2. Crisped bacon, onion, or chopped pickle
3. Dill pickle and shredded cabbage
4. Chopped olives and green peppers
5. Fried ham in small cubes, and minced onion
6. Stuffed chopped olives and onion juice
7. Raw turnip and apples
8. Capers, onion,, and celery
9. String beans, diced carrots, and minced onion;
10. Bacon, crisped, canned peas, horseradish in French dressing
11. Celery (celery root) and minced onion
12. Celery, cabbage, minced parsley, and finely chopped pickle.

Doubtless my correspondent will think of even more combinations. It is understood, of course, that these are just flavorings, used in relatively small amounts. French dressing is mixed with the ingredients first, but mayonnaise may be added at serving time if desired.

Here's a question about setting colors in wash materials- one I have answered again and again, for different people, and always in a negative form.

"Can you tell me how to set the color in red and blue cotton materials? Is it satisfactory to soak the material in salt water?"

Answer: You are wasting time, and wasting material, if you try to "set" the color in dyed fabrics, by soaking them in salt, alum, pepper, vinegar and various other solutions. Of course the color will not run from a dyed fabric, as long as it remains in a saturated solution of salt or alum, but this has no permanent effect on the dye. The fabric is just as likely to fade, when washed later, in the ordinary way. No successful household methods, of setting the color in dyed fabrics, are known.

Another on fabric dyes: "Is it true that green and lavender are more likely to fade than blue or pink?



Answer: It is not true. Green, lavender, or any other one color is just as fast as another, if similar dyes are used.

A correspondent inquires: "How can I clean a leather rocking chair?"

Leather furniture coverings last longer, and look better, if rubbed occasionally with castor oil, or a commercial leather polish, to restore the oil that gradually dries out of the leather. Rub the liquid in well, and wipe off any excess; otherwise, this film of oil will darken the leather, and soil whatever touches it.

Find three questions about spices, very appropriate when we are thinking about fruit cake and other Christmas good things.

First question: "What is allspice made of?"

Allspice is the dried, unripe berry of an evergreen tree. After the berries are picked, they are exposed to the sun for a period of from 7 to 12 days. Allspice has the same flavor as a mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove. That is why it is called "allspice."

Second question: "I should like to know why there is sometimes a white coating on the nutmeg we buy."

Answer: The white coating on nutmegs comes from an application of lime. When the nutmegs are dried, and removed from their shells, they are apt to be attacked by insects. To prevent this, they are usually dipped in a strong solution of lime, which gives them a whitish appearance, and keeps them indefinitely.

Third question: "Do spices have any particular use in the diet?"

Answer: Spices and condiments do not add to the nutritive value of food, but they do add a pleasant flavor. Highly seasoned foods overstimulate the flow of digestive juices. Therefore, spices should be used sparingly, in quantities just sufficient to give a pleasant flavor.

My last inquiry is for a recipe for Scotch Wafers. They are made of rolled oats, and are usually very popular with the family. In fact, a box of them would make a fine Christmas remembrance for some who likes to munch and read. Uncle Ebenezer is one of those persons.

Seven ingredients for Scotch Wafers. I'm ready to read them now:

2 cups rolled oats
1 cup wheat flour
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt.

2 teaspoons baking powder
3 tablespoons fat, and
1/3 cup milk.

Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl, add the fat, and mix together thoroughly. Add enough milk to make a dough sufficiently hard to roll (about 1/3 of a cup). Knead this dough well; roll very thin, and cut with a biscuit cutter. Bake in a moderately hot oven. When cool, the wafers should be very crisp. Raisins may be added. In that case chop them very fine, and if necessary, use a little more flour in rolling out the wafers.

Friday - Candied Peel and other Christmas Confections.

